

Message Text

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11
ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DODE-00 PM-04 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 L-03

ACDA-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 NSC-05 /065 R

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DDR AND E:MR. PARKER
ISA:MR. POOR
PM:MMICHAUD
C:MR. HOPPER
S/S:MR. REDDY

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P 192329Z AUG 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
INFO USMISSION NATO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY
USCINCEUR PRIORITY
USNMR SHAPE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 206885

HOLD FOR OPENING OF BUSINESS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, NATO, UK

SUBJECT: US-FRG TANK HARMONIZATION PROGRAM

REFS: A. LONDON 12770 DTG 131730Z AUG 76; B. STATE 202817
DTG 141807Z AUG 76; C. STATE 194868 DTG 052301Z AUG 76

1. GUIDANCE IN REF B AND C PROVIDED EMBASSY INFORMATION
WHICH SHOULD ALLAY UK CONCERNS ABOUT US-FRG TANK
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HARMONIZATION AGREEMENT. IF QUESTIONS CONTINUE TO ARISE,

KEY POINT TO RE-EMPHASIZE IS THAT US WILL EVALUATE EXISTING (OR POSSIBLY SHORTENED) UK RIFLED 120MM TANK GUN WITH IMPROVED AMMUNITION IN ACCORDANCE WITH 14 JULY US-UK LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING. WE BELIEVE THAT 15 JANUARY DEADLINE IS REASONABLE IN VIEW OF FACT THAT BOTH UK AND FRG TANK GUNS WILL HAVE ALREADY BEEN EVALUATED, AND FURTHER DELAY WOULD INCREASE COSTS AND POSTPONE OPERATIONAL DEPLOYMENT. UK MAY CONTINUE TO HOPE THAT BEFORE US/FRG DECISION, THERE MAY BE A CHANCE TO PUT FORWARD IMPROVED UK 120MM GUN (WHICH WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE FOR TESTING UNTIL LATE 1977). IF MOD OFFICIALS RAISE THIS POINT, EMBASSY SHOULD REPLY THAT THERE IS NO FLEXIBILITY IN FRG PRODUCTION DECISION SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 77.

2. FYI. DOD WILL CONSIDER GROWTH POTENTIAL IN EVALUATING UK GUN, BUT THERE IS CONSIDERABLE RISK INVOLVED IN SELECTING A WEAPON BASED ON ANTICIPATED BUT UNTESTED CHARACTERISTICS. MOREOVER, EVEN WITH ACCELERATED PROGRAM, FIELDING OF UK IMPROVED GUN WILL PROBABLY LAG SOMEWHAT BEHIND FIELDING OF FRG 120MM GUN. ALTHOUGH BOTH THESE FACTORS MILITATE AGAINST SELECTION OF THE UK GUN, US OFFICIALS SHOULD NOT SPECULATE PUBLICLY BEFORE US ARMY EVALUATES BOTH UK AND FRG GUNS. END FYI.

3. REF C PROVIDED TEXT OF MESSAGE FROM MOD MASON TO SECDEF, SUGGESTING THAT HOCKADAY AND MACKLEN VISIT WASHINGTON TO DISCUSS TANK HARMONIZATION PROGRAM. SECDEF REPLY WILL BE PROVIDED BY SEPTTEL.

ROBINSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGREEMENTS, TANKS (COMBAT VEHICLES), TEST FACILITIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE206885
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: LTC HEIBERG:MEM
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760319-0192
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760837/aaaabfoe.tel
Line Count: 91
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 LONDON 12770, 76 STATE 202817
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04 MAR 2004 by morefirh>; APPROVED <24 AUG 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: US-FRG TANK HARMONIZATION PROGRAM
TAGS: MPOL, UK, NATO
To: LONDON
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006